

The Interview From

Pinhead (played by Doug Bradley) must join with his human alter ego (also played by Doug Bradley).



*I was delighted when I was invited to visit to the set of this summer's sickest and scariest film, **HELLRAISER III: HELL ON EARTH**. But I was supposed to interview Clive Barker—and I'd only read one of his books!*

When Claire Raskind, a publicist at Miramax Films, called to tell me she was working on *Hell-*

Cenobites on the streets of New York. Lots of explosions and fire and shit supplement the familiar hooks,



HELL III director Tony Hickox and Clive Barker bond on the set.

raiser III: Hell on Earth, I thought it was kind of strange. Isn't Miramax the company that does all those arty films, like *sex, lies and videotape*? Anyway, Claire invited me and my editorial staff down for a set visit, which meant the craft services table was in for a ransacking. (For the uninitiated, a craft services table is merely a table filled with junk snacks and, usually, beer.)

I arrived on the set with two friends and a photographer in tow. We found out that they weren't shooting new scenes; just reshooting some effects sequences. But at least there was a Pinhead double sipping a Diet Coke and some hot production assistants (movie sets always seem to attract the best-looking women) on hand.

Based on characters by Clive Barker and directed by Tony (Waxwork) Hickox, *Hellraiser III: Hell on Earth* looses Pinhead and a bunch of newly wrought

chains and extreme gore from the first two films. In fact, *Hellraiser III* is a war movie—there are scenes in Vietnam, flashbacks to World War I and, most horrific of all, hideous acts of violence staged on the streets of The Big, Rotten Apple.

Once Barker arrived on the set, we all got drinks and settled in for a talk. I didn't even know I was going to interview Barker; I have to confess that I've read only one of *The Books of Blood*. But, hell, I've seen all his films and read most of his comics. That's enough, isn't it?

Were there some fun things you got to do on this film that you didn't get to do on the first?

There has always been that sexual thing going on—subtextually, or in the first picture, textually. There is a much larger sexual quality to this one. You go into cutting, bloodletting and orgasm here—the *Hellraiser* movies have always been kind of more perverse than the Freddy

HELL

by Christian Gore



"S&M is actually safe sex for everyone." —Clive Barker

Bound and Ready? Director Hickox eyes a shot of *HELL III* newcomer Joey Summerskill, played by Terry Farrell.



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Krueger pictures.

40 *How is Pinhead different in this film?* He's just violent. [laughs] He leaves waste in a very immoral kind of a way. One of the themes of the movie is that we're able to put separate parts of the character back together again. Pinhead confronts the monster in his soul.

It's funny, you can see the influences of Hellraiser on pop culture—sort of like

what punk rock did in some respects. Yeah. Part of the thing is that the punks in England were the working-class rebellion. And by the time it reached [the U.S.], it had already become codified, right? There was an early amount of frustration that was cute and which was in the *Mad Max* movies.

I think Hellraiser ushered in all this trendy piercing and scarification. I don't know if it ushered it in or that

it simply came on the same wave. The *Hellraiser* stuff contains this weird, sort of perverse religious element. I've described Pinhead as the patron saint of piercing.

Once you have gone to the limits of pleasure and pain, what more is there? There are no limits. I think the other thing is—this is also quite accidental—that in the six years since the first picture was made, ordinary sex is actually lethal sex. S&M is actually safe sex for everyone. I did an interview in *Skin Too* that said of *Hellraiser*, "It was an okay movie, but what was great was it gives you some ideas for your dungeon." [laughs] That's my favorite review.

Did you have anything at all to do with designing the new Cenobites in Hellraiser III?

No, this is Bob Keane's perverse genius. [laughs] I guess what we did on the first picture was that we settled the look. The look was, as you said before, leather, piercing; there was a kind of weird fetishistic elegance to these creatures—with their long skirts, buckles, lacing and all that kind of shit.

Your comics are really hardcore. I assume there is less deal-making involved?

Less deal-making, far fewer people. The fact that creating a story costs a great deal less allows you to take more risks; there's much less creation by committee. You can say there are 10,000 legions coming up over the hill, and the artist can draw it for you. There's potentially more spectacle involved. We've gotten much further than I hoped we'd get. I mean, when we did *Jihad*

[*Hellraiser/Nightbreed* crossover comic book], the stuff in there. . . there's a witch collecting semen from a hanged man. I can't believe this picture: semen dropping onto a blanket! I mean, this is a Marvel Comic. [laughs] This is the same company that produces *Spiderman*.

Writing is such a pure art form, in terms of sitting in a room and having nothing bother you; no committees, just you sitting there writing.

It all springs from the same place: the imaginative design and communicating what you imagine. Writing—I mean, *Imagica* took 18 months to write—is a very sultry business. I'm kind of glad to be involved in another kind of business for a while. I'm writing a couple of small books right now for children. Get to 'em young, I say. [laughs] I said to my publisher, "If Edgar Allan Poe had written for kids, this is what it'd be like." We'll see. That's a whole different area of work. Fantasy fiction is very powerful. And again you can get to people while their imagination is still open. Many of the fantasies I read from ages 4 to 10, like *Peter Pan*, *Alice in Wonderland*, the stuff which—I don't know if you saw *Hook*, but I thought it was a really horrible movie.

I agree. But I'm curious if parents are going to want to buy children's books written by Clive Barker.

One book is for 7-year-olds and one is for 15-year-olds. There's a lot of subversive children's literature. Way back to *Where the Wild Things Are*.

Do you have any hopes for underground videos, like Nekromantik?

Pinhead: Patron Saint of Piercing.



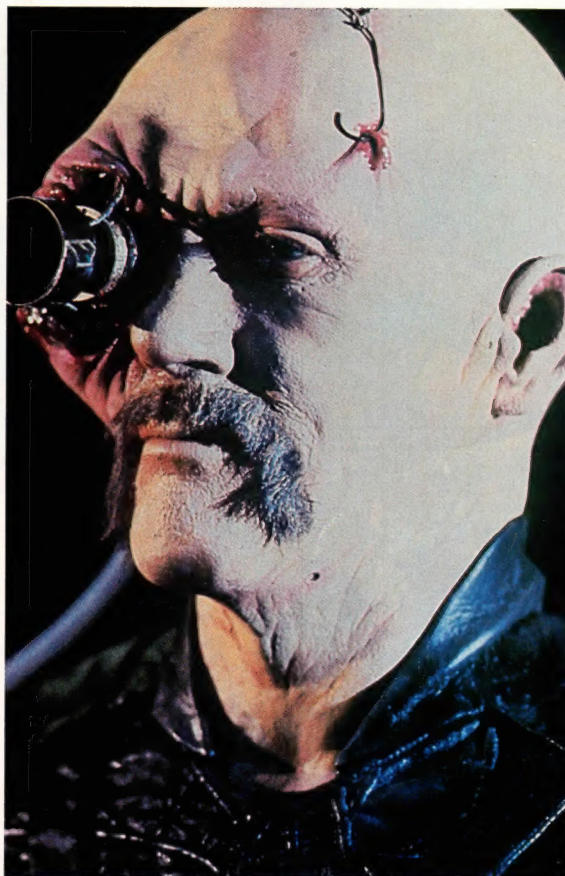
It's always been there in some form or another. Back in the '60s, you could have gone to see Warhol, etc. The problem I don't think is whether this material is available: it's what the audience is, who you're actually getting this to. Because preaching to the converted is the easiest thing in the world.

What did you think of Naked Lunch?

That's a very interesting problem. I think it's a great picture, but I think it's a picture which completely preaches to the converted. Anybody who's going to see that movie is going to go in because it's William Burroughs and David Cronenberg. This kind of meeting of perverse minds makes for a wonderful two hours of cinema.

So essentially you prefer preaching to the masses who may not necessarily agree with what you're saying?

I think our culture is in decline. One of the few ways I believe our culture can be, not healed, but at least we could get some help, is to stop going into the system, because it's basically morbid. My voice isn't any louder than Jimmy Swaggart's, but it's sure not any softer. Why should it be? I have as much right to this mythology as the fundamentalists. Christ is mine, too. Isn't that part of the point? Isn't it the essential nature of that mythology that it is universal and democratic? I claim my slice of the Christian myth. Rather than rejecting it out of hand, I'm doing the reverse. I'm saying it's mine. You can have your interpretation, but I think your interpretation is fucked! My answer always to people who say, "I talked to God," is, "Yes, and so have I." Instead of trying to cast yourself in the role of the Devil, you cast yourself in the role of an alterna-



Camerahead (Ken Carpenter), one of the many new Cenobites, causes an eyeful of havoc.

tive prophet. There's a wonderful line by William Blake. He says of his enemies: *We both read the Bible day and night. But he reads black where I read white.*

On that profound note, I bade Barker farewell, realizing that I had worked up quite a hunger. Claire, the publicist, said something about there not being enough meals for us to eat with the crew. But I inched my way into the chow line anyway. "This food is for crew only!" scolded a cocky production assistant as I loaded my plate. I responded in my trademark friendly manner, "I'm from FILM THREAT—you got a problem with that?"

Unfortunately, it was *me* who had the problem. Thanks to some bad chicken concoction I greedily helped myself to, I spent the night chained to a private, porcelain hell—with steel hooks rending my intestines and the harsh words of that sadistic Cenobite Pinhead echoing in my ears: "I'll tear your stool apart. . ." 